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Report of the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women**

Owing to the critical situation affecting the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the twenty-second session of the Board of Trustees has not yet taken place. However, by means of electronic communications, the Board of Trustees approved a document entitled "Brief on INSTRAW developments during 2002 and current status" prepared by INSTRAW (annex).

* E/2003/100.
** The document was submitted late to conference services due to the postponement of the Board session.

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Annex

Brief on INSTRAW developments during 2002 and current status of the Institute

I. Introduction

1. The present document provides information on the implementation of the work programme of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), as well as on management, administration and finance-related matters during the period January 2002-April 2003. The brief also highlights major institutional developments and challenges that have emerged in the course of the reporting year.

II. Developments relevant to the institutional structure of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

2. In its resolution 56/125 of 19 December 2001, the General Assembly decided to establish a working group composed of representatives from each of the five regional groups of the United Nations to make recommendations on the future operation of the Institute. The Working Group was established in July 2002 and its report was submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session (A/57/330 and Add.1). The Working Group recommended, inter alia, that:

(a) The Economic and Social Council amend the Statute of INSTRAW in accordance with paragraphs 52, 53 and 55 of the report;

(b) The amount of $500,000 be allocated from the regular budget of the United Nations to finance the Institute's core activities;

(c) The feasibility of establishing an advisory board to replace the Board of Trustees be examined;

(d) The Secretary-General appoint a director, to be based at INSTRAW headquarters in Santo Domingo;

(e) A liaison with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs be established;

(f) INSTRAW take concrete measures to revitalize its activities in close collaboration with other United Nations bodies working in the field of gender equality and the advancement of women.

3. In December 2002, the General Assembly adopted its resolution 57/175, in which the Assembly endorsed the above recommendations contained in the report of the Working Group, decided to extend the Working Group's mandate in order to follow up the implementation of the measures referred to above and requested the Working Group to submit a preliminary report on the implementation of those measures to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-seventh session.

4. At the same session, the General Assembly, in paragraphs (b), (c) and (d) of its decision 57/580 of 20 December 2002 on the future operation of INSTRAW:

(b) Approved in the context of the consolidated statement of programme budget implications, a charge in the amount of $250,000 against the contingency fund to finance core activities of the Institute, defined as the salaries and common staff costs of the four Professional posts currently in the staffing table;

(c) Decided that an amount of $250,000 would be set aside in the contingency fund for the current biennium, as an additional provision to the Institute for core activities in 2003, which brought the total amount to $500,000, pending firm pledges and/or payments of voluntary contributions necessary for the viable operation of the Institute;

(d) Requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly, through the Fifth Committee, before the end of its resumed fifty-seventh session, on the financial situation of the Institute, including the status of voluntary contributions to meet the resource requirements necessary to ensure its viability and to consider the additional charge against the contingency fund referred to in paragraph (c) above.

5. On 12 February 2003, Mr. Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, convened a meeting of donors and interested delegations to inform them on the financial situation of INSTRAW and solicit voluntary contributions. During the meeting, the Government of Spain pledged a contribution of $100,000 to be followed by another contribution in a similar amount, once a director is appointed. The Government of Venezuela reaffirmed its pledge of $5,520.

6. In compliance with General Assembly resolution 57/175, the Working Group submitted its report to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-seventh session (A/AC.266/1), which contained the actions undertaken by the Group to implement the measures mandated in General Assembly resolution 57/175. In its report, the Group highlighted the need for the Economic and Social Council to amend the Statute of INSTRAW.

7. The Commission on the Status of Women, in its decision 47/101, took note of the report of the Working Group and recommended to the Economic and Social Council that it consider the reports of the Working Group under the appropriate agenda item of its substantive session of 2003.

III. Implementation of the work programme and the budget for 2002

8. During 2002 and the first quarter of 2003, INSTRAW has implemented a modest but relevant programme of work consisting of the following activities:

A. Research and training

1. Gender and information and communication technologies

9. As a contribution to the World Summit on the Information Society to be held from 10 to 12 December 2003 in Geneva, gender aspects of access and use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and their impact on women's empowerment, have been one of the major activities of INSTRAW during 2002. The research explored whether and how ICTs are a useful tool for women's

empowerment, through the elaboration of five background papers and a series of virtual seminars that took place over a period of 10 weeks. The research addressed issues such as: the social context of information and communication technologies and their impact on women; the management and regulation aspects of ICTs; and the constituents of enabling/disabling environments, among others. It also proposed ways in which ICTs can better serve as an important tool for women's empowerment and for closing the gender digital gap.

10. The initial results of the research were presented at the Division for the Advancement of Women/International Telecommunication Union expert group meeting on information and communication technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women, held in the Republic of Korea from 11 to 14 November 2002. Based on the research findings contained in the background papers and the summaries of discussions from the virtual seminars, INSTRAW prepared a research paper entitled "Overcoming the gender digital divide: ICTs as tools for women's empowerment" that will be made available to Member States at the World Summit on the Information Society. In addition and as part of this research programme, INSTRAW prepared a special collection of resources on gender and ICT issues, featuring numerous books, articles and research findings in English, French and Spanish, which is available through the Institute's web site.

2. Men's roles and responsibilities in ending gender-based violence

11. Another collaborative research undertaking carried out by INSTRAW during 2001 and 2002 explored the issue of gender-based violence from the perspective of men's roles and responsibilities. The results of this project are compiled into a single volume entitled *Partners in Change: Working With Men to End Gender-Based Violence* which was launched on 5 March 2003 during the forty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York. Rather than focusing on issues and strategies for coping with the consequences of gender-based violence, this publication explores the causes of it in relation to the ways in which men and masculinity are socially constructed and how these, in turn, influence men's violent behaviour. It concludes that strategies to eliminate gender-based violence must involve men in partnerships. Some of the individual, institutional and structural changes that are required for this are discussed in the publication, as are concrete ways in which men can become partners, with each other and with women, in making these changes. INSTRAW hopes that this publication will stimulate further discussion on the issue and promote both policies and actions aimed at ending gender-based violence through partnerships between women and men.

3. Men's roles and responsibilities in women's sexual and reproductive health

12. In follow-up to the above-mentioned INSTRAW project on men's roles and responsibilities in ending gender-based violence, INSTRAW is currently finalizing a study on men's roles and responsibilities in women's sexual and reproductive health. This study documents and analyses the main issues around men's involvement in women's sexual and reproductive health, including with regard to sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. Through the findings of this research, INSTRAW hopes to raise awareness about the importance of men's role in this area, and in doing so, help promote gender-sensitive policy-making and action. The study will be made available for distribution in the second quarter of 2003. In addition,

INSTRAW has also prepared a special collection of web-based resources, currently featuring numerous documents, books and articles in English, French and Spanish, that relate to the issue of men and their roles and responsibilities in women's sexual and reproductive health. This collection is accessible through the Institute's web site.

4. Gender aspects of ageing

13. Following up on the Second World Assembly on Ageing, held in Madrid in April 2002, and in continuation of its past work on the issue of ageing, INSTRAW carried out a series of research, information and networking activities that addressed some of the gender aspects of the process of ageing. In particular, it addressed the issue of violence against older women, an issue that calls for increased national and international policy engagement and action. Through an electronic discussion forum on the gender aspects of violence against older persons which engaged researchers, activists and people from different support networks, INSTRAW was able to document and analyse different aspects of the issue.

14. In order to engage the forum participants in a focused and fruitful discussion, INSTRAW prepared a background paper entitled "Violence and abuse in the lives of older women: is it elder abuse or violence against women? Does it make any difference?" This research paper looks at the interrelationship between gender, age, power and violence and outlines the main causes of violence against older women, as well as its impact on the lives of older women. The discussion forum resulted in a synthesis paper summarizing the main threads of the discussion and recommendations for research, policy and practice. Both papers are available on the Institute's web site. In addition, the Institute prepared a special collection featuring resources in English and Spanish on various gender aspects of ageing. These resources, in addition to the above-referenced papers, are also available on the INSTRAW web site.

5. Gender aspects of environment and sustainable development

15. As a contribution to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in August 2002 in South Africa, INSTRAW undertook research and information, dissemination and networking activities that included, among other things, the preparation of a collection of resources, featuring numerous books, articles and research findings in English and Spanish on issues relevant to gender and sustainable development. Additionally, the Institute prepared a study outlining the major conceptual and theoretical trends, emerging issues, challenges and research gaps in the area of gender and sustainable development. This study is currently being finalized for publication and will be made available for wide distribution in the second quarter of 2003.

6. Gender dimensions of conflict and peace

16. In support of the United Nations Security Council session on the follow-up to its resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security in October 2002, INSTRAW prepared a special collection of resources on gender aspects of conflict and peace which contains numerous resources in English, French and Spanish. The collection is easily accessible through the INSTRAW web site. INSTRAW plans to further develop these valuable resource pages and engage in research on and

analysis of some critical gender aspects of conflict resolution and prevention. The outputs will be made available to Member States and United Nations agencies as a resource for the preparations of the forty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in 2004, which will discuss the theme of women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building.

7. Gender aspects of financing for development

17. As a follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002, INSTRAW is currently preparing a study that analyses the outcome document of the Conference, as well as other relevant conference material, including work done by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development in preparation of the Conference, with a view to refining further the main gender issues and concerns in the area of financing for development. The study aims to propose recommendations on critical issues that could form the basis of a strategy plan for integrating gender into the financing for development agenda. It is expected to be finalized and prepared for publication in the second half of 2003.

8. Expert group meeting on new strategies for gender training and capacity-building

18. For the purpose of developing the INSTRAW work programme in the area of training and of taking stock of gender training and capacity-building initiatives within and outside of the United Nations and identifying current gaps and needs in the field, INSTRAW is organizing an expert group meeting on new strategies for gender training and capacity-building, to be held at the Institute's headquarters in Santo Domingo in the second half of 2003. Representatives of United Nations entities and other international organizations, NGOs and trainers have been invited to participate.

19. At the meeting, four experts will present papers focusing on the following:

(a) Existing training and capacity-building materials on gender issues from within and outside of the United Nations;

(b) Gender training needs and gaps, determined by conducting literature reviews and surveys, among other instruments; and

(c) Use of ICTs for training and capacity-building, the pros and cons, including information on the technological infrastructure required.

20. The meeting will identify the main elements for a gender training and capacity-building strategy for INSTRAW for 2003 and beyond.

B. Networking and information dissemination

1. Expansion and consolidation of networks

21. Efforts have been made to maintain and consolidate INSTRAW networks, including regional nodes, research organizations and individual researchers, trainers and training organizations, and ICT specialists.

2. Information dissemination

22. The Institute has continued to position itself as an important source of information dissemination and sharing, through the different Gender Awareness Information and Networking System (GAINS) components and the use of Internet-based tools. As mentioned earlier, all of INSTRAW major research programmes have contained an information and knowledge dissemination component through the creation of the special collections of resources on relevant gender issues. More specifically, the Institute undertook the following activities in this area.

Gender Awareness Information and Networking System

23. On a continual basis, information on ongoing and upcoming research projects and training activities on gender-related topics is exchanged on this list. This list is also used to alert members to calls for papers and relevant meetings and, on occasion, requests for assistance in identifying research partners. All messages posted to the list are archived and are accessible through the INSTRAW web site.

24. Since February 2002 when the list had 257 subscribers, an additional 74 subscribers have been added for a total of 331 subscribers as of March 2003.

INSTRAW News

25. During the reporting period, the Institute's newsletter, *INSTRAW News*, produced in an electronic format, has been issued twice monthly in English and in Spanish. Each issue is sent out to members of the lists, as well as being archived on the web site.

26. The number of subscribers as of March 2003 for each language version of the electronic newsletter is as follows:

INSTRAW News — 553 subscribers

Noticias del INSTRAW — 331 subscribers

GAINS in other languages

27. During the reporting period, the Institute completely restructured and redesigned its web site, which hosts GAINS. Navigation and content were simplified as INSTRAW opted for a user-friendly design and display of GAINS products. The new GAINS site was then translated into French and Spanish. Since then, all new research papers and information featured on the English site has been continuously translated into the French and Spanish languages and fed into the corresponding web sites. In this manner, INSTRAW has managed to respond to its mandate to provide GAINS and its web-based information in the official languages of the Institute.

3. Participation in substantive meetings

28. During the period under review, INSTRAW continued to enhance its visibility and contacts with legislative bodies and the United Nations system.

29. In November 2002, the Officer-in-Charge represented the Institute at the Third United Nations Research and Policy Dialogue, held in Geneva, and briefed the representatives of the research and policy-making community of the United Nations on the major findings and implications of the research from the INSTRAW

programme on men's roles and responsibilities in ending gender-based violence. The Officer-in-Charge also represented INSTRAW at the second session of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, which took place from 24 to 27 February 2003, as well as at the forty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women, during the period from 3 to 8 March 2003, at which a statement on behalf of the Institute was delivered.

30. The Interim Manager/Director represented INSTRAW at the 2002 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, held in July in New York, and delivered a statement on behalf of the Institute. The Interim Manager/Director and the Officer-in-Charge also attended the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly in October 2002. During this session, the Interim Manager/Director delivered a statement on behalf of INSTRAW and organized a meeting of donors. Together with the Officer-in-Charge, the Interim Manager/Director briefed Member States on important institutional and programme developments and responded to queries related to the competitive advantage of INSTRAW and its future work plans. The Interim Manager/Director also represented INSTRAW during the deliberations of the Working Group and responded to its queries.

IV. Executive direction; administrative and financial matters

A. Executive direction of INSTRAW

31. During the reporting period, two Interim Managers/Directors were appointed from 24 June to 31 December 2002. During the remaining period, the Institute was managed by the Officer-in-Charge acting under the supervision of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women.

B. Administrative and financial issues

1. General support services

32. Throughout 2002, the Institute's administrative unit provided the support services required for the operations of INSTRAW. Main assignments included the preparation of cost-plans and exercise of budget control, the provision of personnel management services in respect of General Service staff, as well as the coordination and delivery of administrative and logistical support services, including those related to the services of consultants and contractors engaged by the Institute.

2. Financial performance

33. The subvention credited to the United Nations Trust Fund for INSTRAW in December 2001 allowed for an allocation of $650,000, which was used to cover the salaries of the Institute's core staff, the operation of GAINS and the basic services required for the functioning of the Institute's headquarters. Although the allocation ensured the continuation of the Institute's operations during 2002, the financial situation of INSTRAW remained precarious, given the low level of contributions and pledges. As of 31 December 2002, the amount of voluntary contributions to the INSTRAW Trust Fund received amounted to $110,900 and during the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, held on 5 November

2002, only an amount of $11,136 was pledged in voluntary contributions and no amount was paid.

34. In compliance with General Assembly decision 57/580 (see para. 4 above), the Institute was provided with an amount of $250,000 against the contingency fund to finance core activities of the Institute during 2003. Consequently, on 20 December 2002, the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts of the United Nations Secretariat issued a budgetary allocation of $436,000, including the above $250,000 regular budget subvention, to cover the Institute's operational requirements during the period 1 January-31 May 2003.

35. Following the meeting of donors held by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs on 12 February 2003 (see para. 5 above), voluntary contributions from Governments to the INSTRAW Trust Fund amounting to $127,925 have been received. Thus, with an additional $10,994 of miscellaneous income from other sources, including interest income during the first four months of 2003, the total income of the INSTRAW Trust Fund has amounted to $138,919.

36. On this basis, it is estimated that the INSTRAW Trust Fund balance as of 31 May 2003 would amount to approximately $481,900. This amount is sufficient for maintaining INSTRAW operations, including payment of the salaries of a director and seven staff members, until the end of November 2003. It is also anticipated that an additional amount of $100,000 would be needed to maintain the Institute until 31 December 2003. If the two pledges mentioned earlier are paid, they would be sufficient to maintain the Institute until the end of 2003.

3. Staffing situation

37. During the period under review, the Institute's staffing resources included seven core Professional and General Service staff members: two Gender Analysts, one at the P-3 and the other at the P-2 level, an Acting Administrative Officer at the P-2 level and four General Service staff. The technical services required for the operations of GAINS were provided through the engagement of a consultant who performed under the supervision of the INSTRAW Interim Managers/Directors and core staff.

38. Through coordinated efforts of the Working Group and the Secretariat, a suitable candidate for the post of Director is being identified.